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Broadcasters Letter

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United States Department of Agriculture • Office of Communications • Washington, DC 20250-1300

Letter No. 2709

April 14, 1995

COMING SOON TO A TOWN NEAR YOU -- Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman will host six regional forums to hear about the strength and promise of America's rural roots. The first forum will be held on April 17 in Davis, California. Five others will follow in Abilene, Texas on April 18; Leesport, Pennsylvania on April 19; Fort Valley, Georgia on April 20; Bismarck, North Dakota on April 21 and Edwardsville, Illinois on April 24. The forums lead up to the National Rural Conference at Iowa State University on April 25 in Ames, Iowa. Glickman is hoping to gather ideas to help him advise President Clinton on several issues, among them the writing of the 1995 farm bill. These forums are open to the public. **Contact: Jim Petterson (202) 720-4623.**

NO MARKETING QUOTA FOR 1996 WHEAT -- Until new farm legislation is enacted, the Department of Agriculture cannot offer a marketing quota for the 1996 wheat crop. The amendment to the 1949 Agricultural Act authorized price support and production adjustments for the 1991 through 1995 crops of wheat. Until the new farm bill is enacted, USDA officials must follow the provisions of the 1938 Act, requiring no marketing quota for the 1996 wheat crop unless the total supply of crop would be excessive without it. Given current supply and demand projections, no quota could be issued. **Contact: Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206.**

COTTON STOCKS TIGHTER, WHEAT STOCKS HIGHER -- The outlook for cotton is a little tighter than previously thought, but consumption is also lower. In their latest report on agricultural world supply and demand, USDA officials predict ending stocks of two million bales, a drop of five percent from last month. Ending stocks of wheat are projected at 10 million bushels higher than last month, well below the carryin level. Wheat exports are down, but feed and residual use is up. Food use continues to trail expectations, but prices remain unchanged at \$3.40 to \$3.50 per bushel. Corn stocks are expected to be down 22 million bushels from last month, with imports and exports both up. The price range for corn is forecast at \$2.20 to \$2.30 per bushel. Oats and barley exports are also projected to be higher, but sorghum looks to be down 10 million bushels. The forecast for soybean ending stocks was lowered, but still remain above normal commercial needs. **Contact: Gerald Bange (202) 720-8651.**

TASK FORCE TO BE FORMED -- An apparent conflict of interest caught his eye during his confirmation hearings, and that's the reason Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman asked for a task force to evaluate the Forest Service. Glickman asked Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment Jim Lyons to establish a task force to evaluate the statutes, regulations and policies guiding the activities of the Forest Service. Glickman wants recommendations for streamlining, reducing conflicts and redundancy, and improving cost efficiency. A full report is expected by June 1, 1995. **Contact: Jim Petterson (202) 720-4623.**

CROP REPORTS SURFING THE INTERNET -- More than 400 USDA reports will be placed on the Internet each year, within three hours of their release by the department. USDA is working with Cornell University to make crop estimates and economic forecasts available worldwide, providing direct access for millions of people. Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman says this helps level the playing field for market participants. USDA will continue to issue reports by various other electronic means. For e-mail addresses, contact Jim Horsfield at (202) 219-0698. Also joining the information superhighway is a database that allows better assessment of the water pollution potential of 230 of the most widely used pesticides. That could help farmers, pesticide companies, water resource managers and environmental groups get a better understanding of how and where pesticides may threaten water quality. **Contact: Maria Bynum (202) 720-9152.**

THE 1995 PEANUT CROP GETS SUPPORT -- The average support levels for the '95 crop of peanuts were announced by the Department of Agriculture. The support levels are divided by type, quality and location of the crop, and are based on the national price support level of \$678.36 per short ton for quota peanuts and \$132 per short ton of additional peanuts. The quota support levels for each type are: \$673.99 for Virginia and Southwest Valencia; \$636.45 for Spanish and other Valencias; \$682.74 for Runner peanuts. The loan value for additional peanuts is 19.46% of the quota support level. **Contact: Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206.**

SUGAR MARKETING ALLOTMENTS WILL CONTINUE -- After looking at how much sugar Americans consume, produce, import and how many stocks are on hand, Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman has determined that sugar marketing allotments should continue for fiscal year 1995. Based on current supply, demand and prices, reasonable ending stocks were forecast. **Contact: Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206.**

USDA SETS THE DATE -- The Department of Agriculture will poll soybean producers on July 26 to see if they want to conduct a referendum on whether refunds of soybean assessments should be continued. The assessments are used to support soybean research and promotion efforts. If results indicate a referendum is not supported, refunds will be discontinued when USDA announces the poll results. Polling will be conducted at Consolidated Farm Service Agency (CDSA) county offices (formerly known as Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service), and only those producers who support holding a refund referendum are asked to participate. Absentee forms are available through the mail, or in person, between June 19 through July 14 from CDSA offices. These forms must be postmarked or returned no later than July 14. If at least 20 percent of the soybean producers participate in the poll, a refund referendum will be held. If that is mandated, refunds will continue until the referendum is held. **Contact: Becky Unkenholz (202) 720-8998.**

NO SOUR GRAPES HERE -- It's a scientific first scored by USDA scientists working on seedless grapes. The scientists are now able to insert a new gene into Thompson Seedless grapes, hopefully giving them built-in protection against a common grape virus, Tomato ringspot. That could ultimately decrease economic losses in the industry and reduce the amount of chemicals put into the environment. After the appropriate clearances from USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA scientists plan to screen the new gene-carrying grapevines for resistance to the virus in greenhouse and field tests later this year. The genetically transformed grapevines may eventually be placed in other grape varieties, and could pave the way for plant breeders to improve the disease and insect resistance of all major grape varieties. **Contact: Maria Bynum (202) 720-5192.**

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USDA #1976 -- Look out, here comes baby! In this edition of Agriculture USA, Lori Spiczka talks with experts about the dangers to children in our homes and how to go about child-proofing your home. ****Note to broadcasters:** This is the last installment of Agriculture USA to run 13:30. Beginning with next week's tape, the feature will switch to its new length of 5 minutes.

CONSUMER TIME #1455 -- A less costly grilling season. W.I.C. works. It brings tears to your eyes: pollen counts are higher this year. A Native American sunflower. Under the counter birds. (Weekly consumer features).

AGRITAPE FEATURES #1967 -- Wetlands delineations are on hold for a while. Beef export outlook good. A tight cotton situation. A changing Russian market. Farmers and bats. (Weekly agriculture features).

UPCOMING ON USDA'S RADIO NEWSLINE -- Tuesday, April 25, weather and crops. Wednesday, April 26, floriculture. Thursday, April 27, tobacco markets and trade. Friday, April 28, agricultural prices; catfish production. Monday, May 1, world horticultural trade and U.S. export opportunities. Tuesday, May 2, weekly weather and crops updates; poultry production and value. Friday, May 5, dairy products update. These are the USDA reports we know about in advance. Our NEWSLINE carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup.

USDA RADIO NEWSLINES (202) 488-8358 or (202) 720-8359
COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545
Material changed at 5 p.m. ET each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

ACTUALITIES -- Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman talks about his upcoming regional and national rural conferences. USDA Acting Under Secretary for RECD Michael Dunn on the rural conferences and USDA's role in rural revitalization. Norton Strommen with weekly weather and crop update.

SATELLITE COORDINATES FOR TV NEWSFEEDS:

Thursday, 3:45 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. ET, Telstar 302, C-band, Channel 6 (Transponder 3H), audio 6.2 and 6.8, downlink frequency 3820 MHz. Monday, 11:00-11:15 a.m. ET, Galaxy 4, Channel 12 (C-band), audio 6.2 and 6.8, downlink frequency 3940 MHz.

Comments and suggestions are welcome regarding USDA broadcast programming. Call Larry A. Quinn (202) 720-6072 or write USDA 1618-S, Washington, D.C. 20250-1300.

OFF MIKE

A BIT OF BROADCAST HISTORY...came this week in a postcard from **Layne Beaty**, former USDA Radio/TV Chief. Our weekly documentary, *Agriculture USA*, will be streamlined from 13-1/2 minutes to 5 minutes beginning this week based on broadcasters comments in our recent surveys. Layne says that the program was already going in January 1955 when he arrived at USDA so it survived more than 40 years at that length. It all began after President Eisenhower met with representatives of the Clear Channel Broadcasting Service (CCBS) and gained his blessing for a joint USDA-CCBS service. **Jack Towers** was the original producer with help from **Hollis Seavey** of the CCBS. We hope *Agriculture USA* will enjoy another 40 years of useful service at the new length.

FARM BROADCASTER NEWS TEAM...of 10-15 reporters will be covering the series of six National Rural Forums hosted by Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman starting next week, reports **Gary Wergin** (KFEQ, St. Joseph, MO). They will cover the National Rural Conference, April 25, in Ames, IA with President Clinton and Secretary Glickman and upcoming on-location hearings of House and Senate Agriculture Committees as well for their Farm Broadcaster News Service. Our USDA Radio and TV news teams will be busy providing coverage of the rural forums as well for our daily radio newslines and weekly TV satellite newsfeeds.

NEW LOCATION...and an expansion of radio and TV services were reported by **Bill Whittom** (Farm Times Broadcasting, Sagle, ID). His programming now goes to 49 radio stations and nine TV stations. He tells the agriculture story in Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Nevada, Utah, Washington and California. With his partner, **Evan Slack** (Evan Slack Network, Denver, CO), Bill covers an area from the Mississippi River west to nearly the Pacific Ocean. Bill once was a USDA public information specialist here in Washington and now is actively involved in his own cattle business in his spare time.



LARRY A. QUINN, Director
Video, Teleconference and Radio Center

Broadcasters Letter

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